

## Boy Scouts Book of Good Stories

**THE BOY SCOUTS BOOK OF STORIES** comes to us quite properly during the week of the great Scout drive. It contains eighteen short stories selected by the Chief Scout Librarian, Franklin K. Mathews, who sets forth in a breezy introduction the claim that they are all stories written for grownups but also of interest to boys in their early teens. Now it doesn't matter particularly, but we just mention in passing that some of the stories are distinctly not written for grownups—*The Great Big Man* by Owen Johnson, for instance, to which Mr. Mathews has unaccountably given first place; and *The Lie* by Hermann Hagedorn and two straight ahead Scout stories. The greatest value of the book is that the other sort predominates, as the regulation boy stuff can be found in any number of Scout Year Books and appears constantly in the magazines.

*The Jumping Frog*, ghost stories by Quiller-Couch and Bulwer Lytton, sea stories by Norman Duncan and Morgan Robertson, are things that all boys should read and might not find unless blessed with parents who put them in the way of good reading. Robert Louis Stevenson is here of course, represented by *The Story of the Bandbox*, and O. Henry, by *The Ransom of Red Chief*. Sherlock Holmes and Penrod are not forgotten. But where is Kipling? We wish that something of his were here—a selection from *Stalky & Co.*, perhaps!

Mr. Mathews's book will furnish the ideal gift for boys who have reached the awkward age in this respect as well as others. After a boy of Scout age has the hiking outfit, a few knives, bats and boxing gloves, any suggestion as to further gift possibilities should be more than welcome. *The Boy Scout Book of Stories* added to the library for the benefit of visiting youths would be a nice memento of Scout week.

**THE BOY SCOUTS BOOK OF STORIES.**  
EDITED BY FRANKLIN K. MATHEWS. D.  
Appleton & Co. \$2.

## "All the Brothers Were Valiant"

HOW did "romance" instead of tragedy ever come to be associated inseparably with the sea? It is after all her sons are gone that the old woman in the Synge play, *Riders to the Sea*, can at last sleep o' nights. If there were a mother in Ben Ames Williams's story *All the Brothers Were Valiant* she too might be able to take a well earned rest when the full tale is finally told.

It is a story of four brothers who ride to the sea in whaling vessels. The story begins with the Log of the House of Shore, the entries in which have a tragic sameness. Each entry, according to the ancient form, begins with the state of the wind and weather, since in the life of seafaring folk these are of first importance, with bearing on the ultimate catastrophe. The last entry made by the father is typical of the succeeding entries written in turn by the brothers:

"Wind began light, from the south. This day came into harbor the bark Winona, after a cruise of three years two months and four days. Capt. Chase reported that my eldest son, Matthew Shore, was killed by the fluke of a right whale, at Christmas Island. The whale yielded seventy barrels of oil. Matthew Shore was second mate."

And following each entry, like an epitaph, is always the single line: "All the brothers were valiant." It falls to the lot of the youngest brother, Joel Shore, to record—after "wind northeast, light"—that his older brother, Capt. Mark Shore, did not return with his ship at the end of its three years cruise, having left the ship at the Gilbert Islands, where it took water. "They searched three weeks. They encountered hostile islanders. No trace of Mark Shore." And below is again repeated: "All the brothers were valiant."

There could not be a more dramatic frame for a story. Joel Shore succeeds his brother in command on the next cruise, a quiet, modest, slow man, as we are to understand, in comparison with his bold, handsome, naturally dominant brother,

born "with the will to command." There is a story within the story, for, of course, Mark Shore is found, to clash with his brother for the command of the ship, and to tell the blood stirring tale of his island adventure with the pearls and villainous white men and native women and drunken greed and treachery and murder.

For excitement and horror Mark Shore's story is only matched by the final mutiny and fight on the ship, which every one will agree is the liveliest little scrap that was ever fought between book covers. The harpoon is an effective weapon, and so is the carpenter's adze.

Nor is the woman lacking. Before Joel had sailed the ship's owner had asked him whether he would have use for the contrivance called the "woman's tub," made out of a cask, to swing the lady from the ship to the small boats in comfort and safety. Joel accepts the tub and marries the girl Priscilla, so that when the Nathan Ross starts on its long voyage there are curtains in the cabin windows and flower pots. It is Priscilla who doubts the valor of her husband, but at the last she underscores "All" in the line, "All the brothers were valiant."

The story is a thriller with the plus qualities that lift mere story telling into something more enduring. The descriptions are unbackneyed, and the characters have reality. The old whaler herself has a strong individuality, not a perfect thirty-eight in figure, with her "great shoulders that buffeted the sea," and her masts that "stood up straight and stiff as sore thumbs," but, "give her time, and she would poke that blunt nose of her's right round the world, and come back with a net profit anywhere up to \$150,000 in her sweating casks." The story is short, but makes up for length in intensity and its concentrated drama.

**ALL THE BROTHERS WERE VALIANT.**  
BY BEN AMES WILLIAMS. The Macmillan Company. \$1.50.

A rumor that the chapters of Harold Bell Wright's forthcoming novel are to be introduced with quotations from Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* is not credited in Nassau street literary circles.

## Wood Notes Tamed

**MRS. HELEN PHILLIPS EDDY** has made the songs of twenty of our commoner wild birds into "tree top tunes," words and music, for very little kiddies. She says she did it "with an educational idea in view. Whenever possible the exact bird call has been used, and any information in the verse upon the habits or appearance of the birds is absolutely authentic."

With each song goes a paragraph of comment on the bird, worded suitably for the infant mind. We don't cotton to the practising of "educational ideas" on the extremely young, but Mrs. Eddy's book is not at all formidable in that aspect, and the songs are pleasant and simple, the bird songs being quite cleverly represented by melodic approximations. The whippoorwills of our acquaintance "whip" in a major, not a minor key; the interval of a white throated sparrow's first two notes is not an octave but a third, and the red eyed vireo isn't a scold; he is merely a prosy and prolix little bore in the musical line. However, birds vary with localities. The meadowlarks of Long Island and those of New Jersey file altogether different phrases.

There are marginal decorations, and there is a delightful bright cover by C. Coles Phillips, representing a toddler stretching out its arms to a singing oriole.

**TREE TOP TUNES FOR TINY TOTS.**  
BY HELEN PHILLIPS EDDY. Boston: Oliver Ditson Company. \$1.

**LOST OR STRAYED:** One poet, swart, bearded, lusty and prolific, answering to the name of Robert Browning. He was something of a character monologist, and in that capacity talked a great deal with a certain incoherence, and was constantly surrounded by a crowd of serious people, who were busy fitting meanings to what he said. His favorite haunts were England, Venice, the Italian Renaissance and the weekly meetings of Browning clubs. Virtue will liberally reward any one furnishing information that will lead to the discovery of his present whereabouts.

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Is a vivid picture of the life that may be seen in the wine manufacturing districts of Spain, where love and drink and revolution are intemperately indulged in, where the fruit of the vine is a sharp weapon in the hands of those who exploit the poor and ignorant. In its forecast of events which have happened since it was written it is evidence of its author's almost uncanny insight into the hearts of men. Translated by DR. ISAAC GOLDBERG.

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Publishers,  
681 Fifth Avenue, New York.